



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, November 16, 2007

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THREE MEXICAN NATIONALS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR ATTEMPTS TO SMUGGLE CHILDREN

TUCSON, Ariz. – Herminia Contreras-Inzunza, 34; Micaela Armenta-Hernandez, 27; and Maria de Jesus Salazar-Martinez, 35, all of Nogales, Son., Mexico, were each sentenced here in separate cases by U.S. District Judges David C. Bury, John M. Roll and Raner C. Collins to prison for 18 months, 15 months and 15 months, respectively. Each woman pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Transport an Illegal Alien for Profit for their attempt to smuggle a child through the Nogales, Ariz. Port of Entry. Contreras-Inzunza pleaded guilty on July 25, 2007, Salazar-Martinez on August 30, 2007, and Armenta-Hernandez on August 16, 2007.

Contreras-Inzunza admitted that on May 8, 2007, she attempted to enter the U.S. with a 2-year-old boy with long hair who she claimed was her niece. Contreras-Inzunza presented another child's border crossing visa for the boy. The child was crying profusely, so Inspectors questioned her further and learned that Contreras-Inzunza did not know the child, was going to deliver him to a stranger outside a grocery store in Nogales, Ariz., and expected to be paid \$200 for her services.

Armenta-Hernandez admitted that on June 4, 2007, she attempted to enter the U.S. with a six-year old boy who she claimed was her son. When Armenta-Hernandez presented her son's border crossing visa for the boy, the Inspector became suspicious when the visa photograph did not look like the boy. Upon further questioning, Armenta-Hernandez admitted she did not know anything about the boy other than his age, had been hired by a woman who she only knew by a first name to cross the boy into the U.S., and that the woman would call her after they had crossed and tell her where to take the boy. Armenta-Hernandez expected to be paid an unknown amount of money for her services.

Salazar-Martinez admitted that June 19, 2007, she attempted to enter the U.S. with a six-year old boy she claimed was her godchild. When Armenta-Hernandez presented another child's border crossing visa for the boy, the Inspector became suspicious that the boy was not the child pictured in the visa. Upon further questioning, Salazar-Martinez admitted she did not know the boy and had been hired by an unknown woman to cross him into the U.S. and take to an unknown person outside a store in downtown Nogales, Ariz. She admitting being paid \$300 for her services and Inspectors found \$310 on her person at arrest.

The three smuggled children were turned over to the custody of the Mexican Department of Family Services (the Mexican equivalent of U.S. Child Protective Services) and have been reunited with their families. All three women are Mexican citizens with valid U.S. border crossing visas. As a result of these convictions their visas have been revoked and they face deportation proceedings upon completion of their prison sentences.

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The investigations in these case were conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Nogales, Ariz. The prosecutions were handled by Cynthia R. Wood and Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorneys(AUSA), District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBERS: CR-07-1062-TUC-DCB (BPV) (Contreras-Inzunza) (AUSA Wood)
CR-07-1223-TUC-JMR (HCE) (Armenta-Hernandez) (AUSA Feldmeier)
CR-07-1306-TUC-RCC (CRP) (Salazar-Martinez) (AUSA Feldmeier)

RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-237(baby-smuggling)

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